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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/528,209

03/16/2005

Elaine Stephen

8830-328US1 (208102)

4545

23973

7590

12/04/2006

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EXAMINER

THOMAS, ALEXANDER S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1772

DATE MAILED: 12/04/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/528,209	STEPHEN, ELAINE	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Alexander Thomas	1772	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/16/05, 6/17/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: the brief description of Fig 15 should be – Fig. 15a-d --; and on page 2, line 21, it appears that the term “metal” should be deleted because a metal cannot be a plastic.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-10, 13, 15, 16, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Deveaux ('665). The reference discloses a strap comprising a spine 2 which is inherently more flexible in one plane than another in view of its flat rectangular (elongated) shape.
4. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Morris 725,579. The reference discloses a bar 1 which is inherently more flexible in one plane than another in view of its elongated shape. The bar will also be more rigid in one plane than another and, therefore, more flexible in one plane than another in view of its elongated shape (claim 4). Concerning claim 6, the bar itself may be considered a stiffening member in view of its rigid properties.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 5 and 7 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morris. The reference discloses the invention substantially as claimed, namely a bar 1 which is inherently more flexible in one plane than another in view of its elongated shape having attached thereto two attachment members which may extend laterally from the bar. However, it does not disclose the claimed materials used to make the bar. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use any well-known material, such as metal, to form the bar of the reference depending on the desired cost of the apparatus.

7. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Deveaux ('665). The reference discloses the invention substantially as claimed; see Figure 3. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to remove alternate attachment strips 6 from the tether since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker to eliminate an element or its function as a matter of obvious engineering choice.

8. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Deveaux or Morris each in view of Nero ('208). The primary references disclose the

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invention substantially as claimed. However they do not disclose the use of luminous material in their apparatus. The secondary reference discloses the use of luminous material on tether apparatus in order to enable the user to be seen in the dark; see colun 4, lines 21-26. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply luminous material to the apparatus of the primary references in view of the teaching in the secondary reference in order to safely use the devices in the dark.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexander Thomas whose telephone number is 571-272-1502. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30-4:00 M-THUR.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on 571-272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



ALEXANDER S. THOMAS
PRIMARY EXAMINER